

Organics Subcommittee Meeting Summary

December 1, 2015, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

MassDEP, 8 New Bond Street, Worcester MA

All presentations are posted on the MassDEP website at

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/news/advisory-committees/swac-organics-subcommittee-.html>.

Introductions and MassDEP Updates

John Fischer of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) provided several updates on organics programs and progress in Massachusetts. MassDEP has compiled initial draft data on food waste diversion from disposal in 2014. This includes:

- 13 facilities that achieved an upfront reduction in food waste of about 300 tons on an annual basis
- Donation of more than 25,000 tons of food to food banks and food rescue organizations to feed the hungry
- Diversion of more than 130,000 tons of food material to a combination of animal feed, compost operations, and anaerobic digestion facilities. This does not include complete reporting from all Massachusetts operations, nor does it include materials that are sent to operations in other states.
- Management of approximately 70,000 tons of materials through on-site systems that, for the most part, discharge that material into the wastewater system.

Moving forward, MassDEP is continuing to focus on technical assistance and information resources to help facilities comply with the commercial organics waste disposal ban. At the same time, MassDEP is placing increased emphasis on:

- Increasing food donation where safe and practical.
- Providing assistance to compost operations that compost food materials.
- Fostering the growth of infrastructure for packaged food materials.

As we continue to advance this work in Massachusetts, food waste reduction and diversion is gaining increased momentum both regionally in the Northeast as well as nationally.

US EPA Update

Chris Beling of the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 1 (US EPA) gave an update on several new initiatives at US EPA and nationally. Chris noted that MassDEP recently

received the [US EPA national award](#) for Food Recovery Challenge Endorser of the Year. MassDEP received this award for its leadership on technical assistance and outreach to advance food recovery in Massachusetts, including the RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts (RecyclingWorks) program. In addition, several other Massachusetts colleges and universities are receiving awards. These awards will be formally awarded at the RecyclingWorks College and University Recycling Forum on December 10.

USEPA and the US Department of Agriculture recently announced an ambitious national goal to reduce the disposal of food waste by 50 percent by 2030. US EPA will be forming a national workgroup to support and guide efforts to implement this goal. Chris, along with John Fischer of MassDEP, recently attended the National Food Recovery Summit held on Charleston, SC, which was attended by a number of high-ranking EPA officials, along with many business and non-profit leaders on food waste reduction. At this conference, the Ad Council spoke about development of a major national education and outreach campaign, focused on what consumers can do to reduce food waste. This campaign, which is being developed with the Natural Resources Defense Council, is expected to be launched in spring of 2016. Materials will be available for use by state and local governments, as well as others. US EPA will hold a [webinar](#) on the campaign once more information is available.

RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts Best Management Practices for Food Donation, Joshua Cook, RecyclingWorks

Joshua Cook of RecyclingWorks gave a presentation on best management practices for food donation recently completed by RecyclingWorks. This presentation is posted along with this meeting summary. Attendees raised several comments and questions, including:

Q: Could the best management practices also apply to the donation of food from food manufacturing or processing facilities?

A: Yes, it could apply to donations from food manufacturing or processing facilities, as well as from retail businesses. A participant from Whole Foods mentioned that they do donation from their bakery facility. The general principle is that any food prepared for donation should be managed in compliance with the Food Safety Code, essentially being handled in the same way as if it were to be sold.

Q: Are the tracking logs from the best management practices required to be used?

A: No, none of the best management practices are required, they are recommendations intended to help make food donation programs work most effectively. However, while these are not regulatory requirements, local health officers have the authority to impose specific conditions on food donation as part of food service permits. These BMPs are also intended to help support and inform this work by local health officials.

Q: Could this tracking be done electronically, for example through an app, instead of through paper forms?

A: Yes, that would be up to individual food donation programs. An attendee from Lovin' Spoonfuls, a food rescue organization, mentioned that they have developed a customized app to track and store this information, which can easily be shared with their donors and/or local health officials.

Q: Is the state doing any work on changing food safety labeling laws?

A: No, as far as we are aware, there is no specific work going on to change food labeling laws in Massachusetts. However, the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic has been active on this issue nationally.

RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts FY15 Summary and FY16 Work Plan, Lorenzo Macaluso, RecyclingWorks

Lorenzo Macaluso of RecyclingWorks presented on RecyclingWorks program accomplishments for fiscal year 2015 (July 2014 – June 2015) and on the RecyclingWorks work plan for FY 2016. This presentation is posted along with this meeting summary. Attendees raised several comments and questions, including:

Q: How is RecyclingWorks using the directory and guidance regarding on-site systems for managing food waste?

A: RecyclingWorks uses this directory to provide information to businesses or institutions that considering buying or leasing an on-site system for managing food materials. Two particular points of guidance are to check with the local wastewater utility to see whether the system(s) being considered would be allowed or subject to any specific requirements and to ask for examples of reference facilities where systems have been installed and are operating.

Q: Is there any new state policy or regulations under development regarding on-site systems for managing food waste?

A: No, as far as we know, there are no proposed policy changes under development in this area.

Q: Participants asked two questions regarding RecyclingWorks' technical assistance to compost operators: 1) is this assistance available to both farm and commercial operations and 2) is this assistance available to operations that compost bio-solids?

A: This assistance is available to either agricultural, commercial, or municipal compost operations in Massachusetts, as long as they are either currently accepting food materials for composting or are planning to begin accepting food materials for composting. As long as these operations are composting food materials, this assistance is available, regardless of what other material streams that operation composts. So, this assistance could be available to an operation

that is composting a mix of food materials and bio-solids, and/or other materials like manure and leaves and yard waste.

Q: Is the directory of companies interested in de-packaging a list of generators that generate packaged food materials, or a list of companies that are interested in receiving them.

A: This is a list of companies that are interested in potentially accepting packaged food materials for processing. Many of these companies do not currently have operating facilities but have expressed interest in developing a facility and identifying potential feed stocks. MassDEP and RecyclingWorks are working to connect generators who are looking to manage packaged food materials with companies that are looking for these materials as feed stocks.

Financial Incentives for Anaerobic Digestion in Massachusetts, Amy Barad, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center

Amy Barad of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center provided a presentation on financial incentives available to support anaerobic digestion in Massachusetts. This presentation is posted along with this meeting summary.

Residential Food Waste Collection in Cambridge, Randi Mail, City of Cambridge

Randi Mail gave a presentation on implementation of residential curbside food waste collection in the City of Cambridge. This presentation is posted along with this meeting summary.